

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 /069 W
-----039408 020711Z /13

P R 011637Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7515
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, IS
SUBJECT: DMC-COALITION TALKS HIT NEW SNAGS

BEGIN SUMMARY: IN COALITION TALKS YESTERDAY THREE MAJOR DIFFERENCES WERE HIGHLIGHTED UNDERMINING ANEW THE PROSPECTS OF THE DMC JOINING THE GOVERNMENT: ELECTORAL REFORM, RELAXING COALITION DISCIPLINE ON RELIGIOUS QUESTIONS BEFORE THE KNESSET AND THE DIVISION OF PORTFOLIOS. AT THE SAME TIME DMC LEADER AMNON RUBENSTEIN ANNOUNCED HIS WITHDRAWAL FROM HIS PARTY'S NEGOTIATING TEAM AND HIS NON-CANDIDACY FOR A MINISTERIAL POST. WHILE THE QUESTION OF BEGIN'S INTEREST IN HAVING THE DMC AS A COALITION PARTNER ARISES, IT IS NOT EVEN CLEAR TO WHAT EXTENT HE COULD PUSH THROUGH A COMPROMISE ON THE PRESENT COALITION PARTNERS IN AREAS DIRECTLY AFFECTING THEIR INTERESTS. END SUMMARY.

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1. THE LIKELIHOOD OF THE DMC JOINING THE COALITION, A PROSPECT THAT HAS BLOWN HOT AND COLD EVER SINCE THE MAY KNESSET ELECTION, HAS AGAIN COOLED IN RECENT DAYS. FOLLOWING A NEGOTIATING SESSION YESTERDDAY WITH A GOVERNMENT TEAM, THE FIRST IN WHICH THE NRP FORMALLY PARTICIPATED, DMC HEAD YIGAEEL YADIN WAS QUOTED AS SAYING, "THE CHANCES OF THE DMC JOINING THE GOVERNMENT ARE ONLY 50 PCT." HE

ADDED "UNLESS WE OVERCOME THE STUMBLING BLOCKS WITHIN THE NEXT TWO DAYS, I CANNOT RECOMMEND TO THE (DMC) COUNCIL WHEN IT MEETS ON WEDNESDAY (AUGUST 3) THAT THE DMC JOIN THE GOVERNMENT." AT ABOUT THE SAME TIME PROFESSOR AMNON RUBENSTEIN, THE NUMBER TWO MAN IN THE DMC, ANNOUNCED THAT HE WAS WITHDRAWING FROM HIS PARTY'S NEGOTIATING TEAM AND THAT HE DID NOT CONSIDER HIMSELF A CANDIDATE FOR A MINISTERIAL POST SHOULD THE DMC JOIN THE GOVERNMENT.

2. THE CURRENT FALTERING IN THE CHANCES FOR A WIDER COALITION STEMS FROM DIFFERENCES ON THE QUESTION OF ELECTORAL REFORM, RIGHT TO VOTE "FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE" ON RELIGIOUS ISSUES, AND DIVISION OF PORTFOLIOS. ELECTORAL REFORM DIFFERENCES BOIL DOWN TO DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN THE DMC AND THE NRP ON THE NUMBER OF ELECTORAL DISTRICTS AND THE HANDLING OF SURPLUS VOTES. THE NRP, NOT HAVING A REGIONAL POWER BASE AS DO SEVERAL OF THE OTHER PARTIES, SEES ASSURANCE THAT A DECLINE IN ITS STRENGTH WILL NOT RESULT FROM REFORM. IN THE REFORM PLAN ACCORDING TO WHICH TWO-THIRDS OF THE KNESSET WOULD BE CHOSEN FROM ELECTORAL DISTRICTS WHILE THE REMAINING THIRD WOULD BE ELECTED BY THE ENTIRE NATION, AS IS NOW TRUE OF ALL KNESSET MEMBERS, THE NRP WANTS ISRAEL DIVIDED INTO NOT MORE THAN SIX DISTRICTS-- A FIGURE THAT THE DMC CLAIMS MAKES A MOCKERY OF A LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CONSTITUENCY SYSTEM. THE DMC INSISTS ON 15 OR 16 DISTRICTS. IN AN ATTEMPT TO COMPROMISE, THE LIKUD IS SUGGESTING 10. MOREOVER, THE DMC BELIEVES IT WAS ASSURED IN THE BEGIN-YADIN TALKS THAT PRECEDED THE

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CURRENT ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS THAT THE NRP DID NOT HAVE A VETO OVER ELECTORAL REFORM LEGISLATION TO BE SUBMITTED BY THE GOVERNMENT. THIS ASSURANCE IS NOW BEING QUESTIONED.

3. AN IMPASSE SEEMS TO HAVE DEVELOPED OVER THE DMC'S INSISTENCE ON JOINING THE HELATH MINISTRY TO THAT OF SOCIAL BETTERMENT WHICH IS SLATED TO BE A DMC PORTFOLIO. PREDICTABLY, MINISTER OF HEALTH SHOSTAK AND HIS PARTY (LA'AM) ARE ADMAMENT AGAINST YEILDING HIS PORTFOLIO AND BEGIN SHOWS NO INCLINATION TO OVER-RULE THEM. THE ISSUE HAS BECOME SYMBOLIC FOR THE DMC: RATIONALIZING AND REDUCING THE CABINET WAS ONE F THE PARTY'S REFORM PLANKS; HOWEVER, THE DMC PLAYED NO PART IN ORGANIZING THIS CABINET AND, EXCEPT FOR THE ELIMINATION OF MINISTERS WITHOUT PORTFOLIO, IT IS HARDLY SMALLER THAN ITS PREDECESSOR. THUS, COMBINING HEALTH WITH SOCIAL BETTERMENT WOULD BE A MINIMUM
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CABINET REDUCTION THAT THE DCM COULD CLAIM TO TIS CREDIT. ANOTHER DISAGREEMENT AROSE OVER YADIN'S DEMAND THAT MEIR ZOREA BE APPOINTED DEPUTY MINISTER IN CHARGE OF POLICE IN THE INTERIOR MINISTRY. AND THERE STILL REMAINS THE QUESTION OF THE EXTENT OF POWER TO BE EXERCISED BY THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER (YADIN) IF THE DMC COME IN.

4. WHEREAS ELECTORAL REOFRM AND DIVIDING PORTFOLIOS HAVE BEEN SEEN ALL ALONG AS PROBLEM AREAS FOR DMC PARTICIPATION IN THE GOVERNMENT, COALITION DISCIPLINE ON RELIGIOUS QUESTIONS ONLY RECENTLY DEVELOPED AS A DIVISIVE ISSUE. AT YESTERDAY'S MEETING YADIN STATED HIS UNDERSTANDING THAT HIS PARTY COLLEAGUES WERE FREE TO VOTE THEIR CONSCIENCES ON RELIGIOUS MATTERS--INCLUDING INSTANCES OF A NO-CONFIDENCE MOTIO. NRP HEAD YOSEF BURG OBJECTED WHEREUPON DENIED THAT

HE HAD AGREED THAT NO-CONFIDENCE MOTIONS
BE INCLUDED AMONG THE SUBJECTS ON WHICH THE DMC MKS
WOULD HAVE THE RIGHT TO VOTE THEIR CONSCIENCES.

5. COMMENT: AIDE FROM THE APPARENT SUBSTNTIVE
DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THEDMC AND ITS POTENTILA PARTNERS,
THE QUESTION BEING ASKED AGAIN IS WHETHER BEGIN REALLY
WANTS THE DMC IN. WHILE BEGIN HIMSELF MAY BE OF TWO MINDS ON
THE MATTER, THE CURRENT DIASGREEMENTS SEEM LESS AMENABLE
TO HIS SINGLE-HANDED RESOLUTUION THAN DID THE
DIFFERENCES OVER FOREIGN AND NEW SETTLEMENTS POLICY
BECUASE THESE DISAGREEMENTS STRIKE MORE DIRECTLY AT
THE INTRESTS OF HIS COALITION PARTNERS. EVEN THE
APPARENT AGREEMENT ON SETTLEMENTS, WHERBY NEW SETTLE-
MENT PLANSWOULD BE REFERRED TO THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS
AND SECURITY COMMITTEE IF REQUESTED BY A CABINET
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MEMBER, MAY HAVE BECOME UGLUED BY BEGIN'S ANNOUNCE-
MENT LAST WEEK THAT SHARON'S MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE
WOULD HAVE JURISDICTIONON NEW SETTLEMENTS.

6. ON ANOTHER TACK, WHILE REUBENSTEIN'S ANNOUNCED
NON-CANDIDACY FOR A MINISTERIAL POST DOES NOT, WE
BELIEVE, PRESAGE AN IMMEDIATE WALK-OUT FROM THE DMC
SHOULD IT JOIN THE COALITION, IT DOES INDICATE THE
DEPTH OF HIS FEELING AGAINST BEING PART OF THE BEGIN
GOVERNMENT.
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Message Attributes

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